

## TROUBLES OF A HEROINE.

Mother Harriet Tubman's Romantic Life Story—In Her Old Age and Sickness She is Without Money With a Mortgage on Her Home—An Earnest Appeal for Help.

To The Editor of The Colored American—Here I am in Auburn, N. Y., the home of that sagacious statesman and manly man, William H. Seward. I have just gazed upon the Seward Mansion now occupied by the son that bears the name of his father. It is situated on South street the most aristocratic thoroughfare of the city, and opposite the mansion is Seward Park, where in is a monument erected to the



"AUNT" HARRIET TUBMAN.

Constitution that legalized traffic in human flesh and blood, said that than the Constitution "There is a Higher Law."

About one mile from the home of W. H. Seward, on the same street, lives that remarkable woman, Harriet Tubman.

"Who is Harriet Tubman?" some one may ask.

She was born a slave in Maryland about eighty years ago, and being of the most pronounced Negro type, she was made a "field" hand at a very tender age. Her lot was indeed a hard one—too hard for such a heart as throbbed in her breast to bear, so in 1849 she made good her escape to freedom's soil. But what did freedom mean to her when every wind from the South was charged with plaintive cries of her oppressed brethren for deliverance? It was but a mockery so long as she could hear the crack of the overseer's whip, the clanking of slave chains and the heart rending cries of mother-bereft of their dear ones at the Auction Block.

Something must be done, and she proceeded to do it. Nineteen trips did she make South, rescuing more than 300 slaves from the "Jaws of Hell." Such a terror did she become to the slave holders of Maryland that a reward of \$40,000 was offered for her head. She was bold, daring, elusive. All of her trips to the South were carefully planned and brilliantly executed. She told me that when she found her mother unwilling to leave behind her feather bed stick and her father his broad axe and other tools, she bundled up feather bed, broad axe, mother, father, all, and landed them in Canada. To hear her tell of her thrilling adventures, hair-breadth escapes and dire sufferings, experienced

memory of that fearless man, who, in the face of those who worshipped the Constitution of the United States, a in piloting the trembling slave from the "land of midnight darkness" to the sunlight of freedom, one cannot but believe that she was called of God to do the work which she did so masterfully, so conscientiously, so heroically.

During the Civil War she rendered invaluable service to the Union Army as spy, scout and hospital nurse. With the general of her army, whatever "Moses," as she was called, said, went. She was at Fort Wagner and told me that she prepared the last breakfast eaten by the gallant Colonel Shaw. She numbered among her friends such men as John Brown, Charles Sumner, William Lloyd Garrison, Governor Andrew, the war governor of Massachusetts, Frederick Douglass and many others.

Such in brief is Harriet Tubman, and a rarer soul has seldom dwelt in human clay. Never have I met one who seemed to think so little of self and so constantly of others. For the last seven years I have called to see her on my annual visit to Auburn in the interest of Tuskegee, and each time I have found strangers under her roof—aged, maimed, blind and orphans. Nothing touches her heart more quickly than to see one of her race in distress. She has never been known to turn a deaf ear to the appeal of an unfortunate human being. At this writing she has under her "vine and fig tree" two friendless old women and two homeless orphans.

"Aunt" Harriet cannot do by these unfortunates, however as she has done by others, because the hand of affliction has rested heavily on her for nearly a year. There was a time when she traveled a great deal and whatever request she made of her white friends was granted. Many of her old friends have "Crossed the Bar" while others, I am sure, know not of her present condition. At present her lot is a hard one—dependent entirely on what may be handed her by occasional callers and the scant earnings of her brother, several years her senior.

The property in her possession is easily worth six thousand dollars. It consists of twenty-five acres on which are two good houses, and is only a stone's throw from one of the most magnificent estates in Auburn. On this property there is an incumbrance of \$1,700, and her daily prayer is that this might be removed so that she can bequeath it, free of debt, to her race, to be used forever as an Old Folk's Home. When I called to see "Aunt" Harriet to day, she said to me, while tears coursed down her honest cheeks, "Son, the Lord has sent you to me. For weeks I've been praying to see you, as I have a message which God told me to give you." The message was that I should come to her rescue by helping to save her property. In assisting Prof. Booker T. Washington to raise the large amount of money necessary to run Tuskegee yearly, it is needless to state that my time is well occupied but, still I want to do something to help this woman, who has done so much good for her race. My plan is a simple one, one that ought to find a ready response. Remember only seventeen hundred dollars to be raised; but it is to be raised by August 1. How shall it be done? First, let every Sunday school in Washington, D. C., the capital of the nation for which "Aunt" Harriet has done so much; every Sunday school in Maryland, "Aunt" Harriet's native State; every Sunday school in New York state, the present home of "Aunt" Harriet, and every

Sunday school in Boston where "Aunt" Harriet is so well known, set aside July 14th, as "Harriet Tubman" Day, when the Pastor or Superintendent will try to impress upon the minds of the children the significance of this woman's "Singular Life," and lift a collection for her benefit. Second, let every Woman's Club in the United States help this cause to the amount of at least two hundred dollars more if possible. Third, let every young man or woman of our race that reads this appeal send in at least one dollar from private purse or collections from friends. With all the earnestness of my soul I ask for a quick and liberal response.

"Aunt" Harriet has lifted up her voice in speech, in song and in prayer for this people; she has labored with her hands for means to carry on her mission of mercy; by day, by night, in weather fair or foul, her feet "have moved at the impulse of love" for her fellowman. Now she is bowed down with infirmity. Her gait is unsteady, her eye is dim; the sun of her life ere long must set but Oh! Father, stay that time until this humble message shall have accomplished its mission.

Please make all checks or money orders payable to Harriet Tubman, or order, and address them to Mr. C. A. Smith, Parker street, Auburn, N. Y. The names of all donors with amount will be published except those who request otherwise.

ROBERT W. TAYLOR.

Financial Secretary of Tuskegee Institute.

Auburn, N. Y., June 22, 1901.

## THE CORNER STONE LAYING

Of the Negro Building of the South Carolina and West Indian Exposition—News Notes.

Charleston, S. C., Special—The corner stone of the Negro Building of the Charleston Exposition was laid here on the afternoon of Thursday July 4th, 1901, and it was a grand affair as there was a grand military and civic parade composed of all the leading colored military companies, lodges, unions and societies of the city.

The closing exercises of the Society Street School which was to take place here on last Monday night at Mt. Zion church was held here tonight at Emanuel A. M. E. church.

Prof. Sidney Woodward the eminent colored tenor gave an excellent song recital and concert here on Monday July 1st at the Mt. Zion A. M. E. church. All those who attended enjoyed a rare treat. Mr. Woodward sang the Great Aria from "Don Munio" by Buck.

The Parker's Concert Company gave a grand concert here tonight at the Central Baptist church, Radcliffe st. The Cherokee Quartette led by Mr. Z. Wright rendered excellent singing, also Messrs. George Middleton, W. Green, A. C. Palmer and E. Logan, local talent. It was a musical and literary treat for all those who were present.

The annual baccalaureate sermon of the Avery Normal Institute was preached here last week at the Zion Presbyterian church by Prof. Morrison A. Holmes, the principal of the school. There was a large attendance present, made up chiefly of the parents and friends of the pupils and of the institute. The sermon was an excellent one and was listened to most attentively. The subject of the discourse was "Faith in Human Character," in closing his address Prof. Holmes gave some advice and counsel to the graduates who stood up during its delivery.

B. LADSON.

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